782 As an example we will summarize below the ritual killing of albinos as it was practiced under the royalty. This underlines the mystical value of the victim and is an excellent example of the mechanism inherent in sacrifice; it brings out the ritual value of the details on each of which the Bambara place particular emphasis. Finally, it confirms the value and symbolism of different parts of the body as described in the preceding chapter.

782 /95/ The kings of Ségou were formerly provided with albinos by a 826 man from the village of Pelengena who kept them prisoners and set them aside for this purpose. But this man exploited them by shaving their hair and selling it to the chiefs of neighboring villages as symbols of the men whom, sooner or later, they could reckon to have under their domination. The chief, having counted his subjects, war prisoners held as slaves as well as captives received as tribute, would prepare as many small sticks as there were men; then he would mix up these sticks with the hair and bury them all in the wall over the sill of the entrance to his home. The hair is supposed to represent beforehand an increase in the subjects of his domain and to help bring in the taxes.

But the albinos themselves were kept for the king who sacrificed them to Faro in cases involving the affairs of the kingdom.

1. When the king found himself in difficulties of an administrative nature, the victim was cut in half through the middle of the body at the level of the abdomen by means of a rope of the da fiber (1): his [283 824]

1. Hibiscus. The nyama fiber was considered impure and could not be used for the albino.

cries, gestures, and excrement were considered the vehicles of a nyama which "would eliminate the difficulty encountered by the king." No one was supposed to hear his cries which were not intended for human ears but for Faro, to whom suffering was also due. The king, above all, should not hear the screams under penalty of failing in his enterprise, and yet he had to be present at the torture and watch it with complete detachment.

The lower half of the victim's body was Faro's due. It was carried to the Niger by three men if the victim was a male, or by four if it was a female. One of them carried the body on his head.

BA
773 tools and the throwing weapon were made. Then, unfired pottery and weaving were invented; and men finally came to know stone tools, iron and the forge. The technique of making dwellings seems to have developed more slowly.

a. Fishing

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Bo
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564 Side by side with populations who specialize in the art of fishing, such as the Bozo or the Somono caste, all the Bambara fish in the [96] rivers or watercourses in the neighborhood of their dwellings. A detailed study has been made by J. Daget (1). The Somono, who

1. Jacques Daget, "La pêche dans le delta central du Niger" [Fishing in the Central Delta of the Niger], Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. XIX (1949), No. 1.

are the caste of Bambara fishermen, use traps and nets for fishing; the Bozo remain faithful rather to harpoons and small nets. They are
BA the ones who almost always make the pirogues, for they alone may
Bo enter in rapport with the spirit of the water, Faro. The nets are of
286 knotted mesh made with a weaver's shuttle, sia, and a cylindrical
227 mold, pako. The band of the net, as it is being made, is nearly always attached to a wooden bridge especially conceived for this purpose, the kale or dio soyo kala, a regular tetrahedron whose edges
BA are about 20 centimeters long, one of which is prolonged by a handle
Bo 1.50 meters long. The fisherman, seated on the ground, puts the
283 bridge before him, keeping the handle close to his leg. The fibers
824 used in netmaking are da (Hibiscus cannabinus), kie (Figna unguiculata), cotton, and now European thread.

Bo
226 The Bozo construct weirs from cut and joined tree branches; the weirs assume several different forms according to the regions and
Bo the snares used. Fish are used for human consumption; they are eaten
BA fresh, grilled, fried or boiled, or preserved by smoking or drying. Oil,
251 used for cooking and as a lubricant, is extracted from certain fish,
252 such as the tineni.

BA Fishing in Bambara villages is done communally under the
226 direction of a fishing chief at the time the waters recede. Precise rules of fishing rights and of rents due the masters of the waters are respected everywhere.